



&

Lindsay Allen Associates



# Community Consultation

WBA ... have your say



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## **WHALEY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION**

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**Secretary:** Jon Taylor

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Stephanie Raybould

Barrie Taylor

John Swift

Jean Horsfall

George Smith

Richard Kidd

Sam Gray

Anne Winter

Sue Burnage

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**The Whaley Bridge Association is a Registered Charity**

**Charity No 1120632**

The Association acknowledges its indebtedness to Whaley Bridge Town Council for a start-up grant of £250, to the Big Lottery for the principal grant of £7000 to fund the Consultation and to all those who helped to make it worthwhile.

In carrying out the Consultation, we have not been able to hear the views of as many people as we would have liked – our funds were limited. There will however be other opportunities to voice your concerns and hopes – for example at the public meetings we intend to hold later in the year.

In the meantime, if you have comments or observations on the Report, we would be delighted to hear them – by phone, by email or in person. You can contact us:

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**By phone or by letter:** Jon Taylor (Tel: 01663-732994)

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Lindsay Allen Associates (LAA) were appointed in April 2007 by the Whaley Bridge Association (WBA) to carry out a Consultation in the town of Whaley Bridge, including Fernilee, Furness Vale, Horwich End and Bridgemont.

The following recommendations summarise the outcome of the Consultation and represent the current and future needs and hopes of respondents.

It will be for the Association itself to consider the recommendations and to decide, with the wider community and stakeholders, which should be included in an Action Plan for future developments in the town. The Association will then want to join with other partners in lobbying and attracting funding for these recommendations to be realised.

- 1 In the first instance, to create a Partnership Forum which will:
  - 1.1 reflect the frequently expressed desire of agencies organisations and individuals to work in partnership, to respond to new opportunities and initiatives and ensure that any gaps in provision are addressed;
  - 1.2 build on the desire for a safe, healthy and sustainable community in Whaley Bridge through the development of existing and new social and leisure activities, including intergenerational projects and volunteering schemes.
- 2 Specifically, the Partnership Forum will focus on:
  - 2.1 maximising the use of existing buildings in the heart of the town, through working with strategic partners to explore potential for co-location and on publicising existing venues and facilities to increase current occupancy levels and sustainability;
  - 2.2 exploring the possibility of a dedicated Development / Community Worker for the town to develop and promote community activities;
  - 2.3 continuing the Association's participation in the management of British Waterways' feasibility study into the community, social, economic and developmental benefits to the town of the Canal Basin and Transhipment Shed, including specifically the creation of a 'unique selling point' for the town's tourism ambitions;
  - 2.4 working with the Town Council to carry out a feasibility study to improve access to and usage of the much-loved Mechanics Institute;
  - 2.5 working with the County Council's Library Services to identify ways to improve the service in the Whaley Bridge library;

- 2.6 working with young people in the town and with Footsteps to identify further gaps in provision and to draw up a youth-led action plan to deliver a range of additional activities;
- 2.7 increasing opportunities for volunteering, enabling the residents of Whaley Bridge to contribute more fully to community life and spirit;
- 2.8 increasing the use of the sports centre and exploring the possibility of building a sports hall on site;
- 2.9 encouraging the local authorities to explore the option of allocating additional allotments to meet demand and to explore options to encourage people to sell produce;
- 2.10 providing wider and more diverse opportunities to encourage better health and well-being through improved healthy-eating and exercise facilities for all residents of the town;
- 2.11 reaching out to the community by producing a Whaley Bridge directory of activities in different formats (website, printed material) to promote the wide range of opportunities in the town;
- 2.12 recognising that these plans may need the exploration of additional new facilities within the town;
- 2.13 ensuring that this community audit be updated every 2 years to monitor the continuing effects of demographic change.

# **1 : BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION**

## **1.1 The Beginnings**

In October 2005 the Town Council convened a public meeting to discuss the lack of accessible facilities in the town for social and leisure activities . One of the triggers for this was the closure of the Youth Club by the County Council. Another was the need for community buildings which comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The meeting was attended by some 90 residents including a number of young people. The Town Council then set up a Steering Group which included four councillors and seven local residents and was chaired by Councillor Anne Winter. It was later agreed that the Steering Group should become more independent of the Town Council. Thereafter the Group was chaired by George Smith and more recently by Chris Paling, both local residents.

The Group met monthly throughout 2006. It was acknowledged that previous research was many years out of date and could not be relied on as a basis for future strategy. The Group therefore resolved

- (i) to apply to the Big Lottery Awards for All Programme for a grant of £7000 carry out a community consultation and
- (ii) to form itself into a registered charity in order to improve its chances of being awarded grants. The Steering Group became The Whaley Bridge Association, a charity registered with the Charity Commission on 21 August 2007.

## **1.2 The Brief**

The Association adopted the slogan: ' WBA ... have your say'. The Consultation was designed to give residents the opportunity to say what activities they are involved in now, what facilities they could see themselves using in the future and whether accessibility was a real issue. The resulting brief included:

- raising awareness of the possibilities for greater community participation;
- determining what activities would be most welcome and used by different groups in the community;
- inviting residents to express their views, enabling them to voice their opinions and feel valued as active members of the community;
- identifying whether there is a need for increased accessibility to existing and future resources;
- building capacity by developing new skills in the process and procedures of the Community Consultation.

It was hoped that this would enable the Association to assess what additional community facilities would be required now and for the foreseeable future.

### **1.3 The Grant and the Contract**

On the basis of this brief, an application was made to the Big Lottery Awards for All programme for a grant of £7000. This was awarded in April 2007. At the same time, the Association put the Consultation out to tender to two organisations and a consultancy firm. Lindsay Allen Associates was awarded the contract to carry out the Consultation and to produce a report of the findings and recommendations.

A key aim of the Consultation and requirement of the grant was to give members of the Association an opportunity to be involved in the process and thereby to acquire skills in community development. The close involvement gave its members the opportunity to monitor and evaluate progress throughout, identifying any gaps in the Consultation and reacting positively with additional publicity and further targeted consultation. In addition, members built up an understanding of the more formal aspects of running a charity. As a result there is now a much greater understanding among the members of the problems and issues around any form of community development in a town of nearly 7000 people.

The Consultation took place in the period June – October 2007, with a range of methods used to gather the views of local residents and stakeholders. This included an estimated 3,360 questionnaires which were distributed throughout the town. 376 questionnaires were completed, returned and analysed. The response rate was 11%, which is above the normally acceptable rate of 10%. Key local stakeholders with professional and community interest were involved through dedicated interviews to seek their views.

## 2 : COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 2.1 Profile

Whaley Bridge sits in the High Peak Borough Council Local Authority area, within the county of Derbyshire in the East Midlands region. However due to its geography the main economic and cultural identity of Whaley Bridge is closer to the North West, given particularly its proximity to Manchester.

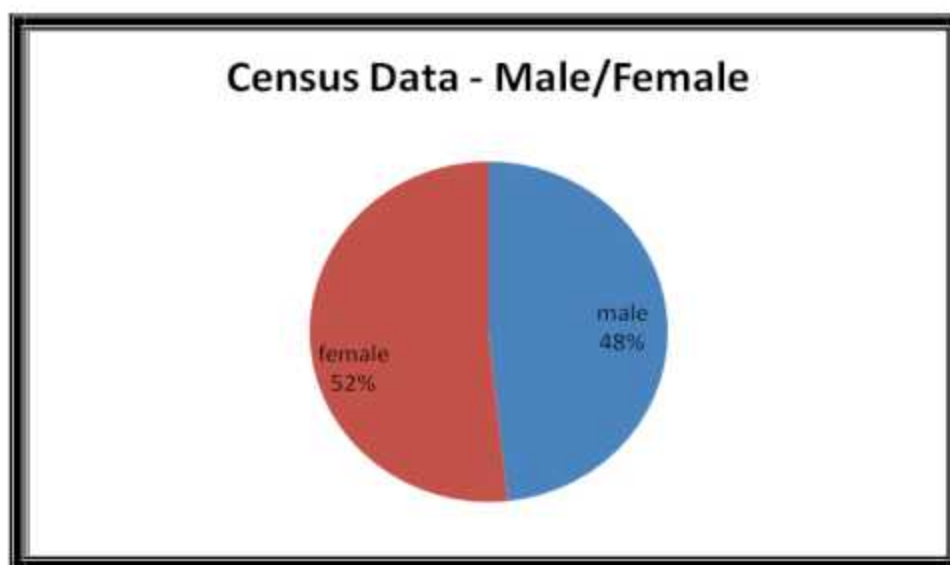
### 2.2 Population

The 2001 Census shows the population of Whaley Bridge to be 6228. As a result of new housing developments, this had risen to about 6600 by 2007. 49.7% of the population are male and 50.3% are female. 26.8% of the population are under 25 and 17% of the population are 65 or over. 98.4% of the population are white.

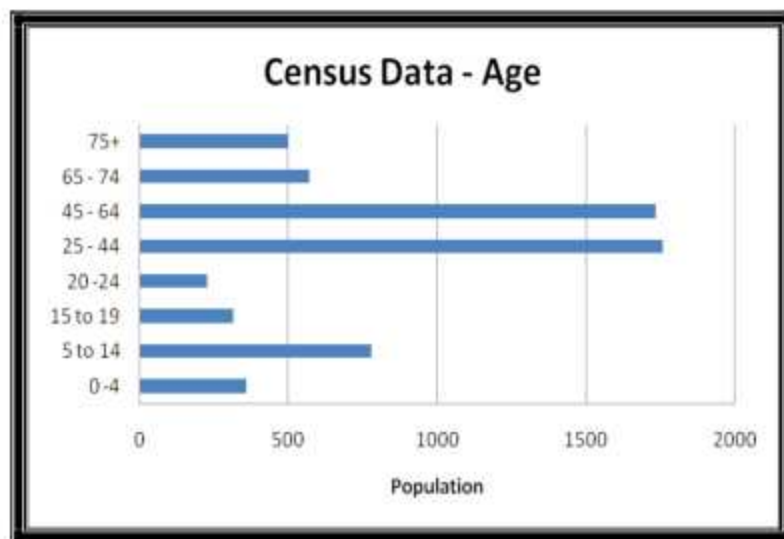
Unemployment in the area is much lower than the average for England as a whole 1.6% against 2.3%.

The number of households in the area has increased from 2639 in 2001 to 2723 in 2007<sup>1</sup>; adults aged 18 and over have increased from 4881 in 2001 to 5148 in 2007. Similarly children aged 5–11 years have increased in number in the same period (Source: Whaley Bridge Town Clerk).

The increase in population, especially amongst children and young people, will be a main factor in identifying what resources will be needed for the future. In addition the town will need to respond to an increased number of people over the age of 60, and for the next generation of teenagers.



<sup>1</sup> Source: High Peak Borough Council.



*(For a more detailed picture of the town based on Census 2001 data, please refer to Appendix II.)*

## 2.3 Employment

Within the town, 72.7% of the population are economically active, only slightly above regional and national averages.

There is also a significant number of people engaged in voluntary work in the Town. Environmental projects supported by Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire are a good example of this. This may be due to a relatively high proportion of retired people in the community.

The increasing number of retired people will have particular consequences for the future of the community. Because of the way in which the County Council prioritises its services, a tension exists between the needs of active retired people on the one hand and frail and vulnerable older people on the other. This is evidenced by a comment by the Assessment Manager, Derbyshire County Council that, "It is very important to maintain the health and well being of the newly retired and active people, and to ensure a wealth of activities and opportunities are available to maintain their lifestyle. HPBC Central Area Forum recognises the importance of promoting activities for older people."

### 3 : METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in conducting this Consultation included:

- **Quantitative methods** which gave residents the opportunity to have their say about current and future needs and was effective in identifying trends and getting the views of over 10% of the population.
- **Qualitative methods** including face-to-face meetings, telephone interviews with stakeholders and service providers, and with specific groups of young and older people through their group leaders and members of WBA.
- **Desk research** of reports and studies which directly or indirectly have an effect on the population of Whaley Bridge. These included a number of documents in the public domain including local regeneration strategies, regional and national policies. Elements of these documents that relate to the town and its demographics have been useful in giving this report a context and reinforcing some of the findings – see Appendix VI.

Publicity to raise awareness of the project and to encourage people to become involved was achieved by articles in the local press, including The Review (a free newspaper) and The Whaley Bridge Town Council Community Newsletter, delivered to every home in the town. A member of the Association gave radio interviews on High Peak Radio. The Association also produced banners and posters which were displayed around the town.

WBA members, their families and friends, were very active in encouraging the community to “have their say”. A programme of consultation activities took place between June and October 2007 including attending at regular and annual events, at the school gate and at leisure activities and through focus groups and meetings with community groups.

The principal focus of the Consultation was on questionnaires distributed throughout the town, delivered directly to homes, distributed to families with children through the schools and placed throughout the town in public spaces. The questionnaires were also posted on the community website to encourage responses by email.

Questionnaires were collected through ‘orange’ cardboard boxes placed in a number of locations including the Mechanics Institute, the library, the veterinary practice, a local wine and spirits store and the two post offices.

Specific events targeted to encourage the completion of questionnaires included:

- the Water Weekend in June and Transhipment Shed Open Weekend in September;



### Questionnaires at the Water Weekend

- a coffee morning held in the Mechanics Institute;
- street surveys on the High Street and outside Tesco Supermarket;
- community groups in Whaley Bridge & Furness Vale;
- a youth consultation at Chapel High School;
- an interview with the new Senior Youth Worker for Whaley Bridge;
- a focus group with the Scouts and focus groups with football and cricket clubs;
- interviews with community stakeholders including local police, the Town Council and officers at High Peak Borough Council with responsibility for culture and leisure services and economic development & tourism.

Appendix V shows the full list of interviewees. A script was designed for use in the interviews. Questions covered the facilities respondents knew or used, issues facing their client group/users and priorities or work being planned in Whaley Bridge. The aim was to gain a view about how any planned improvement would help the town socially and economically. A selection of comments have been used in this report.

## 4 : RESULTS

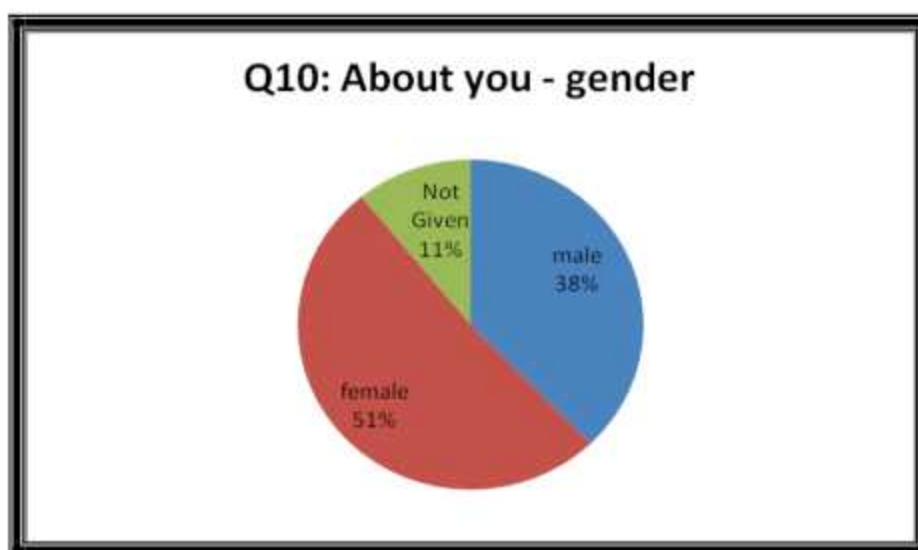
### 4.1 Responses

A total of 3,360 questionnaires were distributed and 376 (11.2%) were completed and returned. These have been analysed and form the basis of this report. A copy of the questionnaire is at Appendix IV.

Questions 1–5, 7 and 10 contained quantitative information. Question 6 demonstrated attitudes towards various facilities in terms of location, accessibility and equipment/resources. Questions 8 and 9 provided qualitative data and comments.

Percentages do not always add up to 100% because of incomplete questionnaires.

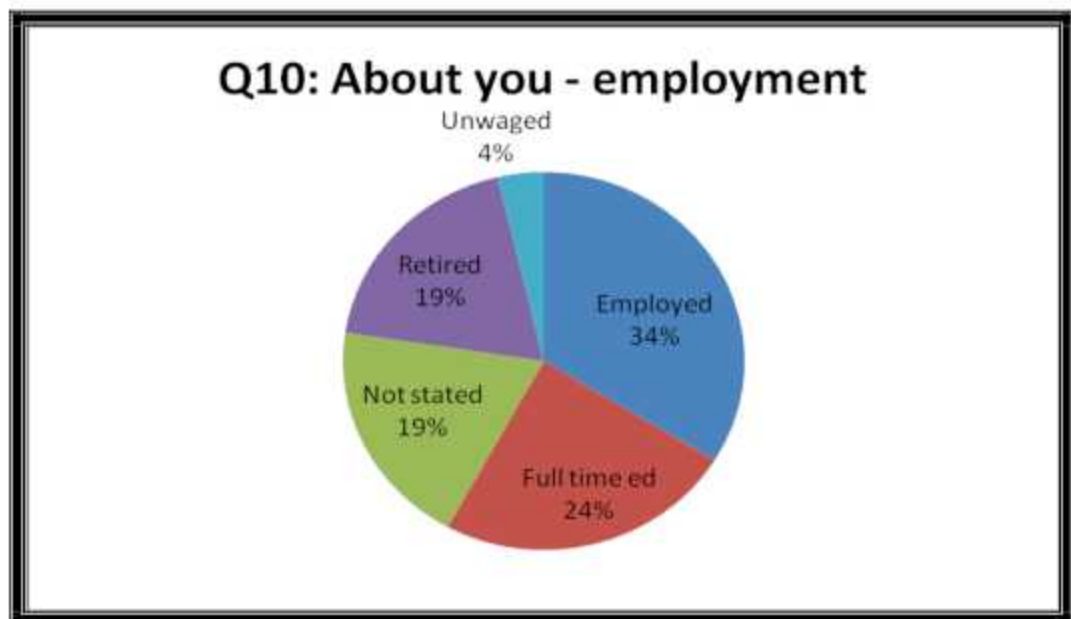
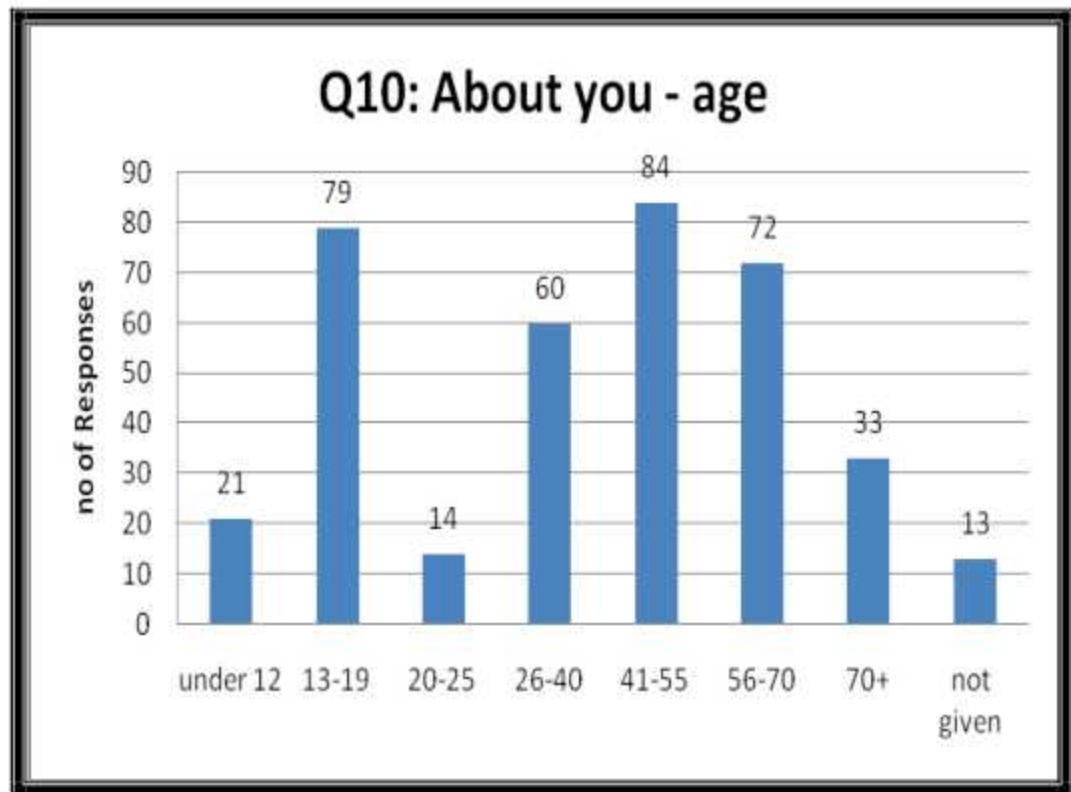
### 4.2 Gender, Age and Employment



- The profile of the respondents is 51% female and 38% male; 11% of respondents did not state their gender.

The following table and graph show the age breakdown of participants. This is reasonably representative of the population. The 20-25 age group appears low, but this age group is more likely to be away at university or college or work and socialise outside the town. The overall response from people under 25, however, correlates with the 2001 Census. The views of those under 19 have also been captured - an important point because this age group is a major focus of attention for planners in statutory agencies.

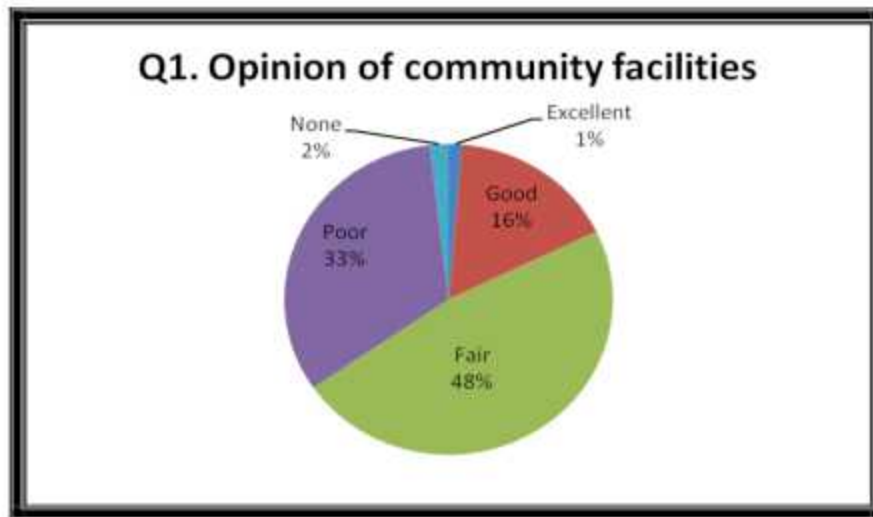
U19 yrs	20 – 25 yrs	26 – 40 yrs	41 – 55 yrs	56 – 70 yrs	70+ yrs
27%	4%	16%	22%	19%	9%



### 4.3 Opinions, Activities and Hopes

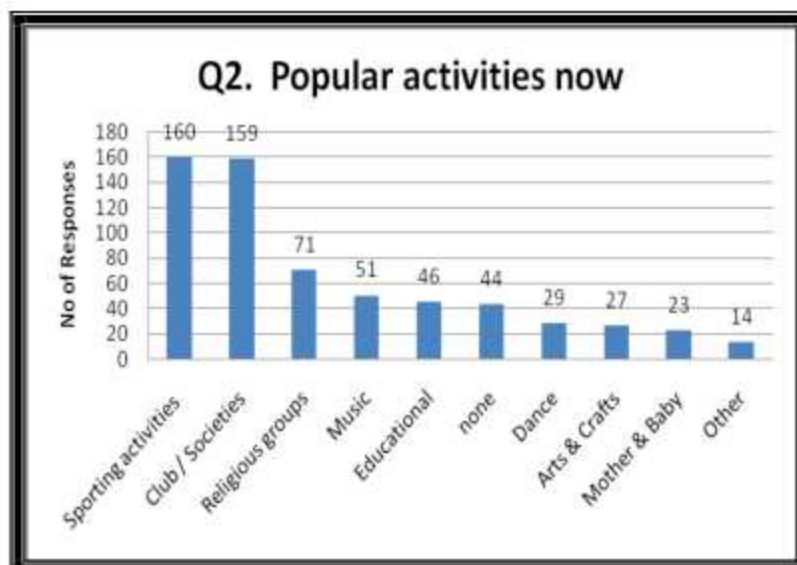
The questionnaire sought the opinions, views and hopes of participants; the following section gathers the results:

**Question 1** *"What is your opinion of community facilities (places where people meet to socialise and/or take part in leisure activities) in the town at present?"*



- 81% of respondents said that community facilities were poor or fair; only 17% said they were good or excellent.

**Question 2** *"What kind of activities do you take part in now?"*

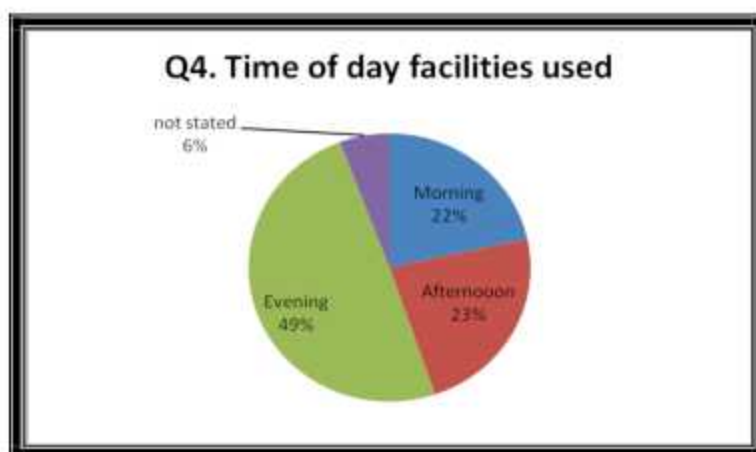


- The most popular activities are sports and membership of clubs and societies that meet in and around Whaley Bridge.

### Question 3 *"Are you a member of any local community groups?"*

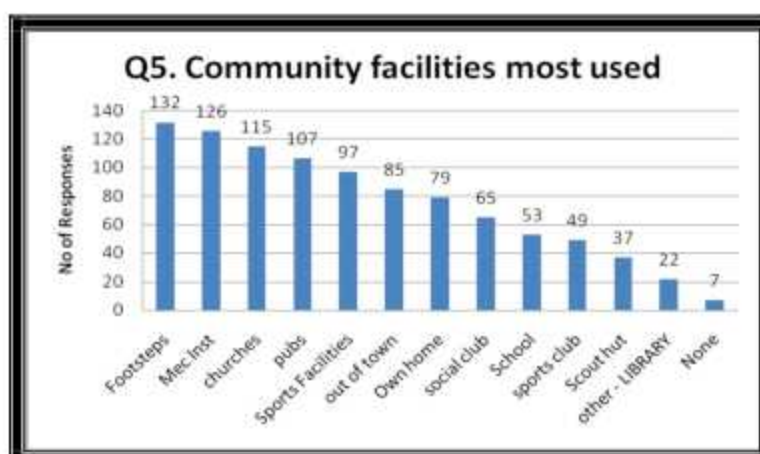
- Appendix III shows the range of local community groups with which people in Whaley Bridge are involved. Responses to Question 3 made it clear that there is a wide variety of groups. 46% (173) of people questioned were involved in one or more groups; 54% (203), however, said they were not part of any group at all.
- Whaley Bridge residents also use a wide range of out-of-town amenities, which are not available locally. These include leisure centres and multiplex cinemas, which would not be appropriate in a community of this size.

### Question 4 *"What time of day do your events/matches/meetings take place?"*



- The most popular time of day for the use of facilities is the evening, the exceptions being mother and toddler groups which prefer the morning and educational activities which take place throughout the day.

### Question 5 *"Which community facilities do you or your local community group use?"*



- Most used are sports facilities and sports clubs, which together achieved the highest response of 146;
- Footsteps and The Mechanics Institute emerged as the next most used facilities, with 132 and 126 respectively;
- Church-owned buildings are the focus of many of the community activities in Whaley Bridge, being the third highest with 115;
- Pubs (107), out-of-town provisions (85), and private homes (79) are also important venues.

Examples of the out-of-town provisions included leisure centres, Manchester Skate park and leisure centres in Disley, Marple, New Mills and Buxton.

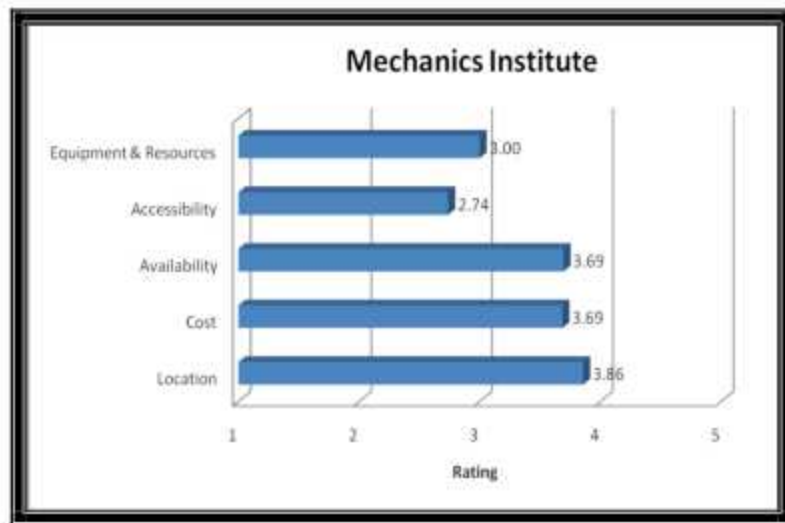
**Question 6 *"What do you think of the facilities in terms of accessibility, availability, cost, equipment and resources or location?"***

This question provided information about specific community facilities. Scores ranged from 1 = poor to 5 = excellent. Only the community spaces that received at least 20 responses have been included in the graph.

### **The Mechanics Institute**

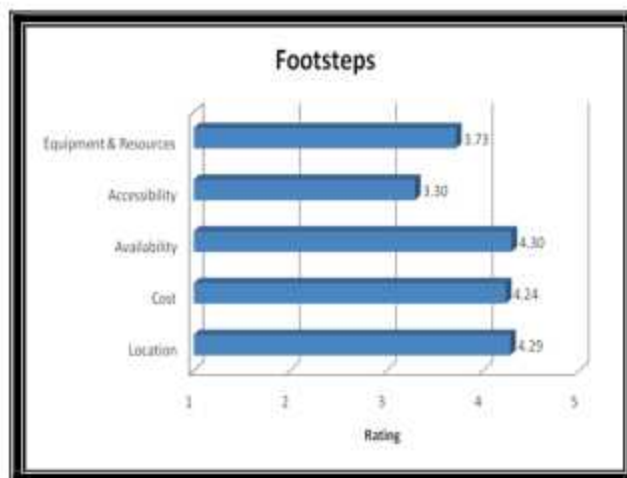


**"The Mechanics needs to be more accessible."**



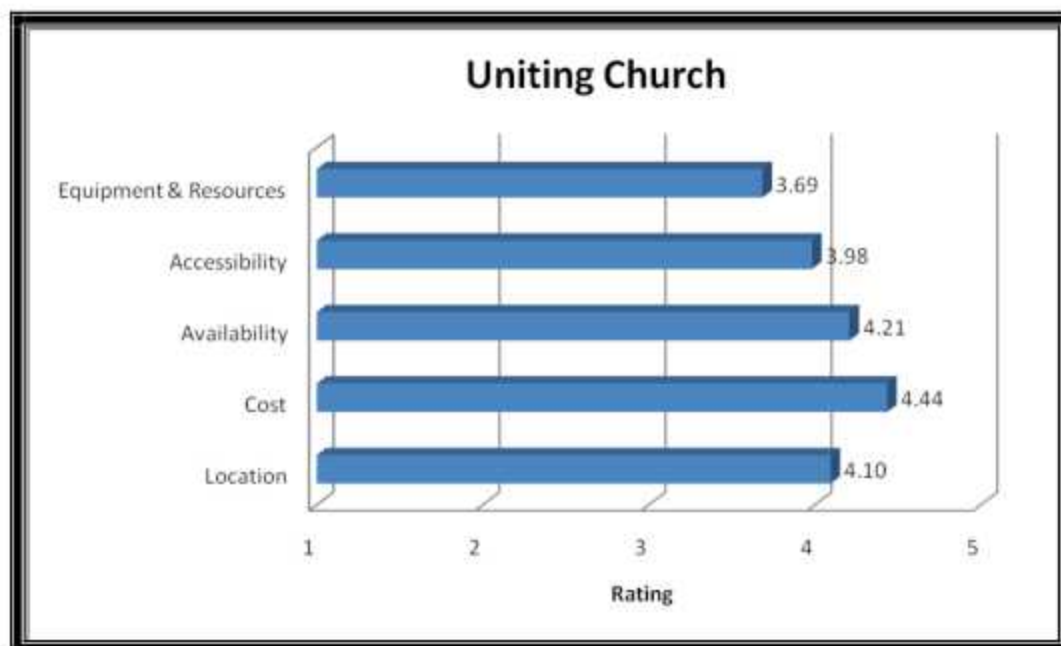
The **Mechanics Institute** scored high on location, cost and availability and fair/good on equipment and resources. Accessibility, however, was regarded as poor.

## **Footsteps Community Café**



It should be noted that responses were made prior to the recent redevelopment of **Footsteps**. Location, cost and availability score high. The newly refurbished, fully accessible premises (funded by the Big Lottery) will house a youth drop-in centre and computer suite. Derbyshire County Council has acted as a partner for service provision.

## The Uniting Church

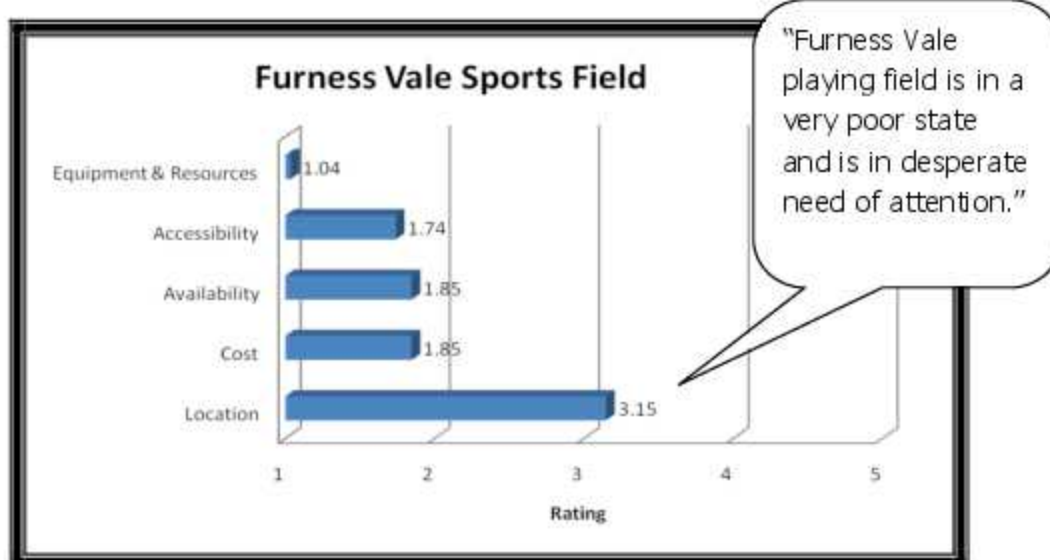


The **Uniting Church** was one of the most frequently cited venues and is used by a wide variety of groups. It scores well on location - being close to the town centre - and ranks well on cost, availability and accessibility.

## Sports Facilities and Clubs



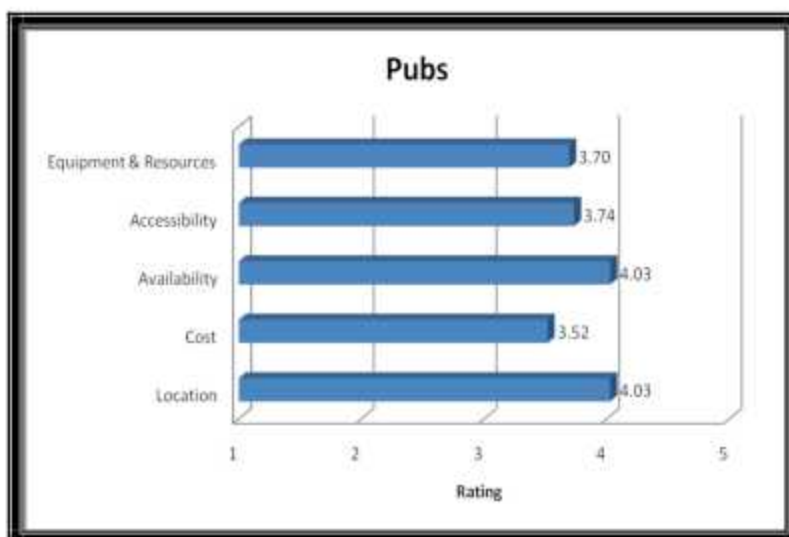
The situation with **sports facilities and sports clubs** is more complicated. Issues had already been raised about how the existing sports facilities might be improved. An all weather pitch and an improved indoor sports hall alongside the existing pavilion would allow more activities to take place at this venue.



The **Furness Vale Sports Field (FVSF)** scored high on location, poor on cost, availability and accessibility and extremely poor on equipment and resources.

Due to its location, the sports field is poorly drained and the repair costs are high. This provision has however already been identified in the High Peak Borough Council's Play Strategy for which a successful application was made to the Big Lottery in 2007.

## Pubs



It soon became clear that **Public Houses** play a very important part in the social life of Whaley Bridge. Many younger residents saw pubs as their space to meet friends. A range of pubs were cited. The graph shows the overall opinion of local pubs. Locations were rated as good. This would support the popular concept of providing increasing community facilities at the local pub. The University of Derby runs an initiative called the "Pub is the Hub" to offer computer training courses in local pubs. There have also been national pilots to put post office and shop facilities into rural pubs.

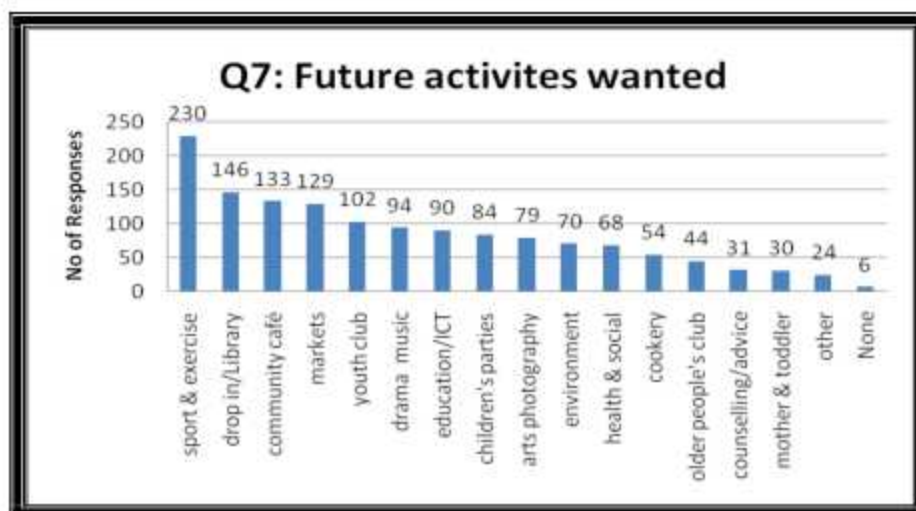
In addition to all the above, **The Memorial Park** has recently undergone some £88,000 of refurbishment, involving local volunteers under a joint venture with High Peak Borough Council and Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire. Local **Primary Schools** and the **Scout Hut** also provide valuable venues for many local activities.

**In summary**, it can be said of facilities available within the community:

- **Locations** – all local centres scored well, although residents do use some out-of-town provisions to fill gaps;
- **Cost** – all facilities, except FVSF, scored well on cost, offering value for money. Even the local pubs rate high for their "well priced pint!";

- **Availability** – all but FVSF scored well;
- **Accessibility** - indoor provision was generally considered fair, with the exception the Mechanics Institute;
- **Equipment and Resources** - were considered fair to good.

**Question 7 “What facilities would you most use in the medium and longer term?”**



- The most popular activities for future development were sports and exercise (229);
- next came an accessible drop-in information centre/library (146);
- interest in markets was high, (128) people making it their priority;
- a community café remains a popular requirement for the future (133).

**Question 8 “Understanding particular requirements for community facilities”**

**Question 9 “What are the benefits to people in having improved community facilities”**

Comments in response to these questions included:

“Greater communication and interaction in the town between town residents.”

“More scope for people to meet other people in the village.”

“We come to Tesco to socialise!”

“Better social cohesion.”

"I would like to meet people in a place like a community centre, not linked to church, and feel part of a community. If I feel like this, others might do as well."

"It would bring the community closer together and will give people more places to go."

"Improvement in community spirit and so increase feelings of belonging and well being."

"More community feeling. People spending more time in Whaley Bridge would help our local economy and local shops."

"Community cohesion – there's a lot going on for a small community and a lot of voluntary effort. Better resources/venues would help ensure this continues."

"Slowly, over the years our facilities have been eroded away. The danger is of turning into a dormitory town with people going out of town so creating a lack of community spirit. This needs reversing."


"Better access for disabled people and better social facilities for kids."



**WBA member collects responses to the questionnaire**

## 5 : ANALYSIS

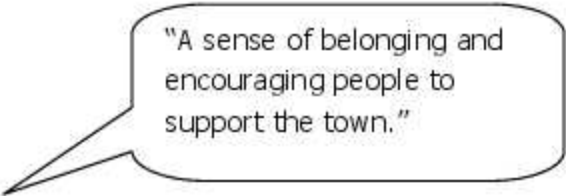
This section draws out the most important themes, needs and hopes named by those who took part in the Consultation. It also identifies where the community and specific stakeholders feel that current facilities can and should be improved.



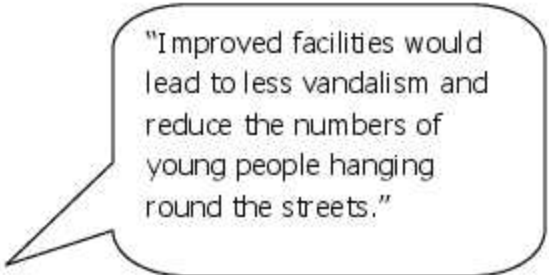
"Bit of a mishmash at the moment. Everything seems a bit make and do."

### 5.1 Community Spirit and Intergenerational Activity

The need to build a stronger sense of community spirit between younger and older residents was a common theme. Any opportunity for people to come together, meet and gain a better understanding of each other would help this process. For example, one local resident made the suggestion that there could be intergenerational activities around music and film which would be of interest people of all ages.



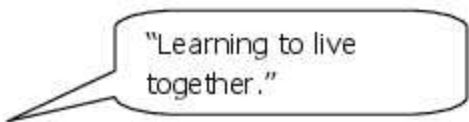
"A sense of belonging and encouraging people to support the town."



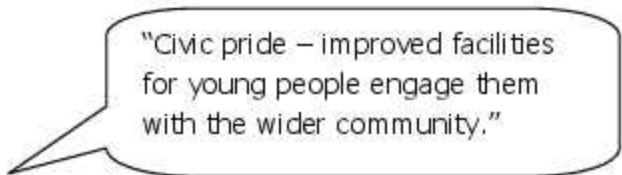
"Improved facilities would lead to less vandalism and reduce the numbers of young people hanging round the streets."

Some gaps were identified in the range of provision. For example, there are currently no facilities to show films in the town. The landlord of the recently refurbished Railway Pub is currently looking into possible solutions to this; he sees the pub as a wider resource for the community.

Another gap is in the provision of sports and exercise facilities for older people, whether newly retired or vulnerable older people. This was confirmed in comments by Phillip Stephenson, Assessment Manager from the County Council Social Services Department. Since the Consultation it is interesting to note that the government is investing more widely in ensuring that there are adequate services for older people, especially those who are more vulnerable.



"Learning to live together."



"Civic pride – improved facilities for young people engage them with the wider community."



**Memorial Park, Whaley Bridge**

(Photo, courtesy of High Peak CVS)

"Villagers would not have to travel out of the area in order to take part in sports. Health improves with exercise. Young people would have more to do in their spare time and would enjoy being part of a village team."

## 5.2 Transport Accessibility

Transport access to services is one of the biggest issues for older people and young mothers, as is also limited public transport at certain times. The High Peak Borough Council Citizens Panel (2006) found that 70% of residents experienced difficulty in accessing local services by public transport, and the fact that there is limited public transport in the evenings means that people can feel even more isolated. Both these problems would be alleviated if more facilities were located in the town.

The staff at the High Peak Citizens Advice Bureaux Service was interviewed as part of the stakeholder consultation. The Bureaux uses the Mechanics Institute as the base for its weekly sessions. Being a good central location, the current space works well. The building is, however, not accessible and does not lend itself to privacy for clients.

Young people would like to have places that are more accessible. They currently go out of town to participate in clubs and to meet their friends. For example, some young people from Whaley Bridge walk to Chapel Youth Centre on Friday evenings, but do not find it possible to offer return invitations.



Provision for children and families, in particular activities and services for the 0–5 age range, was considered to be adequate, a view echoed by the local Health Visitor. The area has generally better provision than other parts of the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales area. For older children, in the 6–14 age range, provision is considered reasonable, with sports clubs, scouts and guides, drama, dance and youth clubs. In order to increase participation, a different method of publicity may be required.

### 5.3 Sport and Exercise

The range of leisure activities in the town at present is comprehensive and is offered in a variety of locations (See Appendix III). Many young people, however, take part in sports activities in Chapel-en-le-Frith, New Mills and Buxton, often linked to where they go to school.




**Whaley Bridge MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area)**

Whaley Bridge Sports Centre is run by the Town Council and comprises an all-weather MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area), which has floodlighting and a fully accessible pavilion, with on-site car parking. It is, however, underused at present. Evidence from the Youth Worker suggests that this is because of the unsuitable level of lighting. In addition, the High Peak Borough Council Leisure and Cultural Services Officer recognised that the area could benefit from an artificial grass surface.

## 5.4 Recreation and Culture

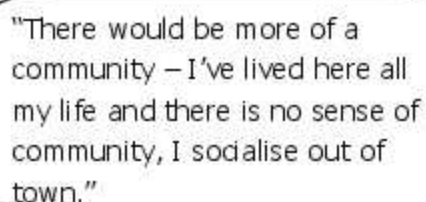
The library, located in the basement of the Mechanics Institute, is well used and has recently been refurbished. The Library Service throughout the High Peak is currently being reviewed; a report will be available in April 2008. This will include a plan for the Whaley Bridge library. The Chief Librarian is keen to work in partnership with local communities in order to ensure that libraries provide a positive and well-used community space, as well as a lending service, information centre and exhibition space.



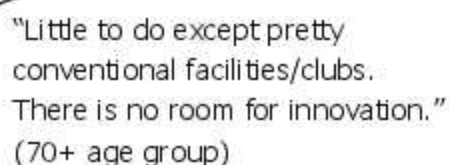
"A larger, more accessible library."

In a recent study, Creative Economy in the High Peak 2007, exhibition space for artists has been identified as one of the main barriers to the growth of the cultural industries in the High Peak. This document is part of the East Midlands Creative Industries Rural Strategy Study commissioned by Culture East Midlands.

High Peak Community Arts works throughout the area and has a strong commitment to taking artists out to the community. The charity has worked with schools and local artists on various projects including artwork at the station. The Mechanics Institute and Uniting Church host drama, dance and art sessions, although access remains an issue at the Mechanics Institute.



"There would be more of a community – I've lived here all my life and there is no sense of community, I socialise out of town."



"Little to do except pretty conventional facilities/clubs. There is no room for innovation." (70+ age group)

There are many active "Friends of ..." groups in Whaley Bridge, including Friends of the Railway Station and Friends of the Memorial Park. Groups meet on a regular basis around the town, at the Mechanics Institute and in pubs. The Amenity Society meets in its own space in Horwich End. Interest in environmental issues and activities rated relatively high. Evidence from Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire is that the level of volunteer activity is high.

Allotments provide opportunities for exercise and healthy eating and encourage positive intergenerational activity. There is however some evidence from the questionnaire that there is not sufficient land allocated for allotments.

## 5.5 Tourism and Economic Development

Whaley Bridge has great unrealised potential for tourism. The fact that the town attracts an increased number of visitors each year suggests that more facilities would benefit both the tourists and the local community. These could include cafés, performance venues and a heritage and tourist information centre. All this, however, is hampered by the lack of a regeneration plan for the town, including particularly the building of a new bridge into the Bingswood Industrial Estate. The feasibility study mentioned in Section 7 and Recommendations 2.13 may provide a way forward and encourage new projects.

"Make more use of canal building and make area around canal more user friendly – put the farmers' Market there."

"Keep people with the community rather than having to go outside the local area."

Markets are important in attracting visitors to the town and featured strongly in the findings (129 people) and would be a benefit to the local community and to visitors. The Destination Management Partnership for Derbyshire and the Peak District is working with tourism clusters in the area which include groups of businesses involved in tourism.

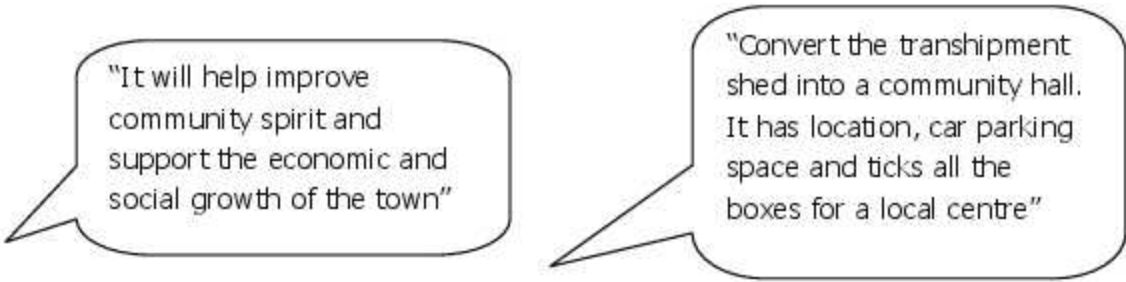


Transshipment Shed

The continued restoration and development of Bugsworth and the possible restoration of the Whaley Canal Basin features in the recent Derbyshire and the Peak

## 5.6 Further Suggestions

One comment from a local resident's response to High Peak Borough Council, Whaley Bridge Regeneration Partnership Newsletter July 2007 reads, "Build a band stand in the Canal Basin. This would help tourism and give Whaley Brass Band a place to play."



"It will help improve community spirit and support the economic and social growth of the town"

"Convert the transhipment shed into a community hall. It has location, car parking space and ticks all the boxes for a local centre"

Another comment from the above Newsletter suggested, "a community café run by locals in centre of the town. Something that would attract tourists and locals alike and that would bring a sense of identity back to Whaley. Although there are a few cafés now they are not very big and not very accessible. More importantly they are not very welcoming. What we need is somewhere everyone feels welcome that could be a place to drop in and meet friends for a coffee. It is something that a lot of locals would welcome and do talk about regularly."

Other ideas included a Tea Room and Gift Shop at the Canal Basin to attract visitors; paint and refurbish the Railway Bridge; more litter bins in the Canal Basin; even an Annual American/Classic Car show!

## 6 : EMERGING THEMES

There is a genuine and pronounced desire on the part of agencies and organisations to work with the community. This is evidenced by the fact that when speaking with stakeholders and service providers, Lindsay Allen Associates met with nothing but enthusiastic support and a determination to “make things happen”, for example from libraries, the Primary Care Trust, Whaley Bridge Town Council, High Peak Borough Council, Churches and High Peak Council for Voluntary Service. These would be natural partners in a Forum (see Recommendations).

The development of Footsteps is a good example of a community-led partnership working jointly with the Big Lottery and Derbyshire County Council to improve substantially youth provision in the town by making the entire building accessible. This has created a new youth facility and has also enhanced the value of the computer suite. The new building (re-opened in March 2008) also has additional space for wider community use. The challenge will be to see how the Association can add value to this excellent project.

The Mechanics Institute, Footsteps, the Uniting Church and local sports facilities are already well-used venues – being in fact the top four most used community spaces. Some concern was raised during the interviews that a brand new facility (if that was the outcome of the Consultation) could have a negative impact on existing resources.

It was clear from comments in the questionnaires and stakeholder interviews that there is a need for a “Unique Selling Point” to attract visitors and to enhance Whaley Bridge for both residents and visitors. Many respondents cited the Canal Basin and Transhipment Shed as an area for development, giving a variety of ideas of how it could be developed. It was therefore of great relevance that part way through the Consultation, British Waterways announced a £50,000 grant from the East Midlands Development Agency to carry out a “Feasibility Study for the Whaley Bridge Transhipment Warehouse and Canal Basin”. A Steering Group was set up with representatives from a number of local organisations, including the Association. The contract to carry out the feasibility study was won by Heritage Works Trust who aim to complete the Study and hand in their report by 31 July 2008.

The desire for an improved community spirit featured strongly throughout the Consultation, especially amongst older people, and related to a feeling of belonging and a desire to be part of a thriving community. Creating a community centre was a suggestion from a number of participants.

Against this, however, we need to set the gradual erosion of traditional facilities – directly to the point is the comment about “the danger of turning into a dormitory town with people going out of town so creating a lack of community spirit. This needs reversing.” Initiatives are already underway through the Town Council and High Peak Borough Council to address, in part, some of the community spirit/cohesion issues through the Regeneration Partnership.

Looking at this from another perspective, many participants emphasised the need for a safe, healthy and sustainable community. A common observation, confirmed by the Police Community Support Officer and others providing positive activities for young people, is the concern about anti-social behaviour amongst a small minority of young people. The refurbishment of Footsteps is principally motivated by a recognition that much more needs to be done for young people in Whaley Bridge.

Communication across the board – or the lack of it – is a frequent comment. 54% of respondents were not involved in clubs/activities and often cited that they did not know about them. This is despite the fact that the Council publish, every two or three years, a booklet listing all the groups in the town. Older people retiring to the area felt isolated and unaware of the range of activities and clubs available. This theme cropped up again in relation to communication between the age groups. Many people wanted to see activities which would be intergenerational – appropriate and open to people across the ages.

## APPENDIX I : Bibliography

1. 10 Year Youth Strategy, Aiming high for Young People 2007–2017
  2. Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government, discussion Paper, June 2007  
*Department for Community & Local Government, Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local (discussion paper, June 2007)*  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/324564>
  3. Emda's Regional Economic Strategy, A Flourishing Region, 2006–2020
  4. Derbyshire Dales & High Peak Community Strategy 2006–2009
  5. Derbyshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2006–2009
  6. High Peak Borough Council Regeneration Strategy – building distinctive communities 2005–2010
  7. High Peak Borough Council Play Strategy 2007–2012, Playtime in the Peak!
  8. Arts Strategy for the High Peak 2003
  9. Creative Economy in the High Peak, 2007 part of the East Midlands Creative Industries Rural Strategy study commissioned by Culture East Midlands.
  10. Whaley Bridge Regeneration Strategy March 2003
  11. High Peak & Derbyshire Dales Co-location of Services Study 2005
  12. High Peak Borough Council, Central Area Forum - Older People – Community Life in the High Peak with a focus on Computer Information; how to access information online; volunteering, leisure & learning opportunities; health & well-being held at Cromford Court, Whaley Bridge on 4 October 2007
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## **APPENDIX II : 2001 Census Information and Statistics for the Town of Whaley Bridge**

### **Population**

The 2001 Census shows the population of Whaley Bridge to be 6228. The population figure is split between males at 49.7% and females at 50.3%.

### **Age of Population**

Compared with East Midlands and also nationally, Whaley Bridge has a smaller proportion of its population aged under 25. In fact, 26.8% of the population is under 25 compared to an England average of 31%. This contrasts with the proportion of people aged 30-64 years where 51.5% of the people in Whaley Bridge are of this age group compared to 46.4% in England. The over 65's population of Whaley Bridge is 17% and slightly higher than in England 16%.

### **Ethnicity**

The Town is predominantly white. Nationally, 87% of the population are White British; in Whaley Bridge this rises to 97.5% with a further 0.9% categorised as White Other.

### **Religion**

As would be expected from the ethnicity indicator above, religion follows a similar pattern with 75% of Whaley Bridge people stating Christian as their religion compared to an England average of 71.7%.

### **Health and Unpaid Care**

At 16.2%, the proportion of people with a limiting long-term illness in WB is only slightly lower than regional and national averages.

The general health of the population, according to the 2001 Census of Population, is slightly above the regional and national comparisons with 70.4% having good health. The area does differ slightly when looking at the amount of unpaid care provided. For people in Whaley Bridge that provide unpaid care, the overall amount provided is lower than regional and national averages.

### **Economically Active**

Within the town, there are 4,532 people aged between 16 and 74, or 72.7% of the population who are economically active, which is only slightly above regional and national averages. Part time workers are similar to the national average, however, there are more people, 1961, or 43.5% of 16 to 74 year olds who work full time compared to 41% in England and self employment (11.4%) is higher compared to 8% nationally. The proportion of retired people is also relatively high in Whaley Bridge at 15% compared to 14.1% in the East Midlands.

## **Qualifications**

When looking at qualifications of the 16-74 year olds, it is at either end of the qualification attainment spectrum that differences exist between Whaley Bridge and regional and national comparators. The area has 25% of its population with no qualifications - below the 28.9% in England and much lower than the 31.6% in the East Midlands. In contrast, 24.5% of 16-74 year olds have a level 4 or 5 qualification, which is higher than the 19.9% in England and significantly higher than the 16.6% in the East Midlands.

## **Occupation**

Again, the occupations of people in the area do not differ greatly from regional and national averages. In the area, 17.5% of people are employed as managers or senior officials, which is slightly higher than the 15.3% in England and the 14% in the East Midlands. This is the largest employment group for Whaley Bridge. The least common occupation for people is sales and customer services, which accounts for 4.6% of all people in employment and this compares to 7.5% in the East Midlands & England.

## **Employment**

The 2001 Census of Population also considered the travel to work method of people and the area had 3.9% travelling by train, whereas the most common mode of transport at, 62.6% is by car or van compared to 54.9% in England. 11.7% of people working mainly from home, which is higher than the 9.2% for England. In addition, a smaller proportion of 16-74 year olds travel to work on foot (8.75%) and this is noticeably lower than for England as a whole (10%).

## **Unemployment**

Around 922 people were unemployed in the High Peak Borough Council area as of August 2007, which equates to 1.6% rate, and is much lower than the 2.3% found in England. (Source: Derbyshire County Council)

## **Households**

There were 2639 households in the area at the time of the 2001 Census of Population. The 2007 figure is now 2723. (Source: High Peak Borough Council)

## **Access to Car or Van**

Of all the households in Whaley Bridge, 17.6% had no car or van, significantly lower than the 26.8% recorded for England. This contrasts sharply with the 32.5% of households that have access to 2 cars compared to 23.5% for England and 25.2% for the East Midlands.

## **Tenure**

Over a third of properties (36.6%) are owner-occupied and owned outright, which is significantly higher than the 30.8% in the East Midlands. 44% are owned with a mortgage or loan. In contrast, a much smaller proportion of properties in Whaley Bridge are rented from the local authority, (9%), or rented from a Registered Social Landlord, (0.19%), than is the case in England (13.2% and 6.1% respectively).

## **APPENDIX III : Range of Clubs and Societies in Whaley Bridge**

**A range of clubs and societies in which people are currently involved**

**(Source: Q3 in Questionnaire)**

Amenity society	Mother & Baby
Anglican Church	Mothers Union
Art group	Music Ensemble
Athletics	Probus
Beavers Club	Rose Queen
Bible Study	Running club
Book Club	Sailing Club
Bowling Club	School PTA
Brownies	Scouts/Cubs
Chinley Women's Group	St John's Ambulance
Cricket	Swimming
Dancing	Toddler Group
Darby & Joan	Twinning Association
Drama	Uniting Church
Fencing	Volunteer Bureau
Football	Walking Group
Friends & Fun club	WB Bowling Club
Friends of FV/WB Station	WB Town Council
Friends of the Park	Whaley Bridge Association
Furness Vale Community association	WBUC Singers
Furness Vale Football Club	Weight Watchers
Furness Vale Social Club	Well Dressing
FV Bowling club	Whaley Bridge Tennis
FV governing Body	Yoga
Garden Show Society	Youth - 1st Taxal Church Youth Group
Gardening & Allotment Group	Youth Club – at Footsteps
Good News Church	Youth Club – Uniting Church
Goyt Valley Striders	Youth - Lost Prophets
Goyt Valley Tangent	
Groundwork Volunteering	
Girl Guides	
History Society	
Horwich End WI	
HP Moot	
HP Orchestra	
Jogging club	
Keep Fit	
Ladies Guild	

## **APPENDIX IV : List of Stakeholders Interviewed**

Whaley Bridge Town Council - Linda Leather , Chair

Whaley Bridge Town Council - Stephanie Raybould, Town Clerk

High Peak Borough Council – Lawrence Milner - Economic Development Service

High Peak Borough Council - Andy Brown – Leisure & Culture Services

High Peak Community Housing – Graham Hirst

Derbyshire County Council Libraries Service – Ann Ainsworth, Operations

Manager: West

Derbyshire County Council, Youth Service – Pam Wilson, Senior Youth Worker

Derbyshire County Council, Older People's Services - Phillip Stephenson, Assessment  
Management Service

Primary Care Trust - Alison Tranter, Health Visitor, Goyt Valley Medical Practise

Derbyshire Police Community Safety Officer – Patrick Findlay-Wilson

High Peak Arts Development Officer - Richard Johnson

Minister, Uniting Church - Revd Michael Peat

Whaley Bridge Residents Association - Nye Rowlands

Whaley Bridge Community Trust – Jean Horsfall

Amenity Society & Friends of Groups – Cllr John Pritchard

Business representatives – Terry Pattison - Goyt Wines

Citizens Advice Bureau – Pam Jones

Groundwork, Derby & Derbyshire - Rachel Billings

## **APPENDIX V : Policies and Strategies**

This appendix lists some of the national, regional and local policies and strategies that are already impacting or will impact on Whaley Bridge in terms of services and facilities in the town. The list is not exhaustive. It offers an indication of how local community cohesion and regeneration is supported at all levels of government. Many of the papers spell out the Government's emphasis on relationship building and partnership working.

### **National Policies**

#### **10 Year Youth Strategy 'Aiming High for Young People 2007–2017'**

The Government's 10-year strategy has specific measures including the extension of the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds (operated through the County Council) and a commitment to giving young people greater influence over decisions on spending on youth activities, support for young people led projects.

#### **Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local government, Discussion Paper, June 2007**

The Dept for Communities and Local Government sets out the Government's vision of prosperous and cohesive communities offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. The Government hope to realise this vision by engaging and involving communities in activities that impact on their everyday lives & strengthen efforts to ensure access to quality services for all.

### **Regional Policies**

#### **EMDA's Regional Economic Strategy 'A Flourishing Region 2006–2020'**

Within this regional strategy, theme three, Achieving Equality refers to creating a dynamic society and stronger economy under the aim of "Cohesive Communities" and the encouragement neighbourhood renewal and develop the capacity of local groups to improve community cohesion. Some of the elements of activity in Whaley Bridge fall within this strategy, especially the tourism and economic development activity, including social enterprise.

### **Local Strategies**

#### **Derbyshire Dales and High Peak Community Strategy 2006–2009 'Our Community ... Working Together'**

The Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) was set up in 2003 and brings together local councils, public services and voluntary & community groups and residents together. The LSP is required to produce a Community Strategy to guide its work over the

next few years. This structure is a good link into the partnership and decision making process for the local area. The LSP links into county resources and support and the wider East Midlands through out Government Office for the East Midlands. Each of the themes within the Community Strategy are relevant to life in Whaley Bridge, and all of the issues arising from this local consultation are contained within the Community Strategy, for example Opportunities for young people, health, access to services and community participation and involvement.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy 2006–09 'Working Together for a Better Derbyshire'**

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on all local authorities and their partners to produce a Sustainable community strategy which was to help improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. The Derbyshire Partnership Forum, is the structure to implement our Local Area Agreement (LAA).

- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Sustainable Communities

The mechanism to find out more about Derbyshire Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement would be through HP CVS or the local LSP as it sets the broad priorities for Derbyshire, encourages partnership working. Budgets are becoming streamlined to cover the priorities identified under each of the four themes and can be measured against national and locally set targets.

### **High Peak Borough Council Regeneration Strategy – 'Building Distinctive Communities 2005-2010'**

A key action point in this regeneration strategy is the building of the Goyt Bridge to create a new access route into the Bingswood Industrial Estate. This will have a significant impact on the town centre and should encourage more people into the town for recreational purposes once the canal basin has been developed. This will in turn have the potential to make Whaley Bridge a livelier town, with tourism linked with improved community facilities.

### **High Peak Borough Council Play Strategy for 2007–2012 'Playtime in the Peak'**

The Borough Council have a role to provide safe places for children and young people to play. Their aim is for the High Peak to be a "child friendly place where all children and young people have access to play opportunities within their local communities, which offer variety, adventure and stimulus. They will be able to play freely and safely and make choices about where, how and when they play." The strategy contains an action plan and includes an investment priority with reference to Whaley Bridge Memorial Park (already completed). Furness Vale Sports Field was identified for BIG funding.

### **Arts Strategy for the High Peak 2003**

This strategy lays out the strategic aims for the whole of the High Peak. It contains medium terms objectives that may support discussions around shared resources - for example, seeking to increase the availability around the Borough of quality exhibition space where work can be well lit and well displayed. There is also mention of the Mechanics Institute which "could be made available for arts classes and activities". High Peak Community Arts, based in New Mills, has a long tradition of working across the District, including in Whaley Bridge and could be approached to take part in projects around the development of this project.

### **Whaley Bridge Regeneration Strategy March 2003 (Roger Tym Partnership)**

Much of this strategy focuses on economic regeneration and the need to "sustain and enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of centres, and to maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector. The role of district and local centres is to provide a valuable and economically successful service to local communities." The report highlights leisure and recreation facilities and the fact that these are very limited in Whaley Bridge itself and that young people who already travel out of Whaley Bridge to go to school are much more likely to travel out for leisure purposes too. The report identified the need for a "new leisure/relaxation facility for young people in Whaley Bridge could usefully be combined with an information/drop-in centre where they could receive advice and support." The developments currently taking place at Footsteps could fulfil this need.

### **High Peak and Derbyshire Dales Co-Location of Services Study 2005**

The purpose of this report was to assess opportunities in the area for co-location of services. In Whaley Bridge, Footsteps is an example of how partners come together to deliver service. The new facilities will offer community wide café, a youth drop in centre and computer and Adult Education suite. The Mechanics Institute, where many community activities take place, is also home to the Library. It may be a worthwhile exercise to review the demand for future services that have the potential to co-locate in the town as part of the Action Plan, given the often scarce resources available.